



SWISS WINTER ALPS & CHATEAU D'OEX INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FESTIVAL



9 DAYS, 8 NIGHTS
7 DAYTIME BALLOON FLIGHTS SCHEDULED

Each year two of our “Highlights of the Alps” programs are extended to include four days of participation in the Chateau d’Oex International Balloon Festival, now in its 32nd year. During our four Festival days we’ll fly with nearly 100 colorful and uniquely shaped balloons invited from all over Europe to participate in the week-long event. Drifting through the beautiful, snow-covered valleys with this enormous fleet of whimsical balloons is a lifetime experience of privilege and fun. The remaining three days of balloon flights we will fly beyond the Chateau d’Oex valley, for flights of longer duration and skillful exploration of the magnificent winter Alps.



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Our pilots, each with an average of 29 years of commercial balloon pilot experience, are highly skilled in creating a steady flow of wonderful experiences to enjoy in our balloons, such as:

Slowly drifting along the tops of snow-covered pine trees, close enough to reach out and gently caress the powdered boughs...

Easing up a snowy ridge as a herd of wild mountain goats, just below your basket, scamper through deep snow and over rocky outcrops on an energetic mission to nowhere. And then there will be the fox who thought he was alone on the mountain side...

Floating through quaint mountain villages at window level, as villagers step onto chalet terraces to joyfully embrace our magical appearance in their lives....

Dipping down into a pretty valley to follow a crystal mountain stream, and the pleasant babble of its fast-moving water...

Leisurely crossing the walled and massive medieval castle of Gruyere, exchanging greetings with delighted people in the square...

Gently landing on a snowy slope for a brief visit with surprised and greatly amused skiers...

And the never-ending views of the majestic snow-covered Alps, surrounding us as we carry you over fascinating rock formations and into valley after sculpted, glistening, snow covered Alpine valley.

Day 1 – We will meet you at Hotel le Richemond in Geneva at 3:00 p.m. and drive to the lovely Alpine village of Gstaad, the gracious winter playground for Europe's well-to-do. Known for its elegant lifestyle, the pedestrian-only promenade is lined with intimate

restaurants and fashionable boutiques. The charming Hotel le Grand Chalet, perched on a hilltop overlooking the village, will be our home during our eight nights in Gstaad. Dinner this evening will be at la Bagatelle, the acclaimed gourmet restaurant located in our lovely hotel.

Days 2-4 – Each day after breakfast we will be driven to our balloon take-off site, carefully selected to make the most of that day's wind direction. By 11:00 a.m. we will be drifting through some of the most breath-taking scenery in the world. For approximately the next three hours the magnificent wonders of the Swiss Alps will gently slip by as we enjoy lavish buffet luncheons in our balloons, prepared each day by our very own chef and complete with fine wine. Our mid afternoon landings are often greeted by excited locals who share in our champagne celebrations. If time permits we might sightsee or shop in the village, or return to the hotel for a drink by the fire or to snuggle in a mountain of down before gathering for dinner. Throughout our trip, our gracious evening parties in Gstaad's finest restaurants are the perfect ending to each day, including le Grand Chalet's gourmet la Bagatelle; Cafe du le Cerf serving superb raclette and cheese fondue for 400 years; The Chesery, voted Switzerland's best restaurant; and venerable "Guido's" at the 5 star Palace Hotel.

Days 5-9 – Balloon Festival! Each morning we will be driven to the snowy take-off field in Chateau d'Oex to watch the spectacular inflation of so many original and bright balloons. The round balloons in many colors and patterns come first, including Buddy Bombard's flowered balloons carrying you and your fellow Buddy Bombard guests. Then the playful shapes come to life, the winged cow and giant frog, the Scotsman with his kilt, a pink pig



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and elephant, the mammoth cell phone, and many more fun and original designs. During Festival days we'll fly through the Chateau d'Oex Valley with this magnificent fleet of colorful balloons, while continuous entertainment is provided on the ground with professional parachute teams, hang gliders and large hot air dirigibles, all in a wonderful winter carnival atmosphere. Festival days also include fine lunches in entertaining settings hosted by Buddy Bombard, as well as our elegant dinner parties described above.

Day 9 – After breakfast we will drive you to Hotel le Richemond in Geneva with approximate arrival at noon.

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January 19-27, 2010

January 27-February 4, 2010

\$17,988 per person, double.

Single supplement \$1,920.